

## POPULAR OBSERVATIONS.

FROM A FREE TRADER'S POINT OF VIEW.  
AN ENGLISH INVESTIGATION OF THE AMERICAN  
TARIFF.

To the Editor of The Tribune.  
Sir:—The "Fortnightly Review" of December last contains an article on "The American Tariff," its Past and Its Future," from the point of view of an advertising Englishman whose popular prejudices have but obscured his mental sight. He evidently considers that his countrymen are premature in their convictions that under the new Democratic dispensation the tariff will be got rid of, and British products of manufacture given up upon the market here in a flood. "No government is likely at present to be strong enough to sweep entirely from the statute books the protective tariff and to establish a tariff for revenue purposes alone. It requires," he further says, "a unusual temerity to allege that the tariff system of the United States has been a failure for that country." He then goes on to show how the United States, largely ruined by the War of Secession, has in little more than twenty years become by far the richest country in the world, with tempo industries throughout the length and breadth of the land, with debt almost extinguished, with credit of the highest order and with prospects that are difficult to rival and impossible to exceed.

The independence of the United States, as shown by a Washington census bulletin, had diminished in the interval between 1850 and 1890 \$220,000,000, while the debt of the rest of the world had increased in the same interval \$405,000,000.

The total amount of capital embarked in manufacturing during the last ten years in the United States has increased over 100 per cent, according to our census reports. The tariff, according to this certainly impartial observer, has largely developed American manufactures and has had the effect of giving higher wages to workers engaged therein, as he proceeds to show by tabular statistics. Ten years ago the United States was very backward as compared with most European countries, from a manufacturing point of view, but in the interval the percentage of increase has been great, especially in all the large cities. In eight Northern cities it appears that in 1880 15 per cent of the whole population were engaged in manufacturing, and that in 1890 the number had increased to 20.7 per cent. Between 1850 and 1890 the actual advance of wages paid in manufacturing industries had increased to a larger extent than the increase which took place in the previous thirty years. In some special cases the wages appear to be more than equal to the incomes of professional men of fairly good standing in the country, and they would be esteemed absolutely handsome if employed by professional men on the Continent of Europe."

It may not be assumed that the increase in the rate of wages is entirely due to the tariff, but may be due in part to the active and real competition at home, which necessitates efficient labor and good wage thereto. Our English friend does not think that the McKinley tariff had the effect of increasing prices of commodities generally, as the general course of prices has been downward for a series of years, nor has it succeeded in stopping the flow of imports into the United States, but has increased foreign trade. In short, the American tariff, however scratchy, may be from the English point of view, failing to have been a particularly bad thing for us.

The only quarter from which we have suffered by the tariff, according to our friend, is the failure of the American government to recognize it as a legitimate by the Civil War and the revolution in the shipping business caused by the substitution of iron for timber.

As to the English writer's drift, thinks that when the people are all paid off and the rest of the Governmental expenditures remain stationary, we shall be compelled by the necessities of a patriotic public purse to lower tariff duties.

The author, an English Free Trader on our tariff, is entitled to consideration, and should open the eyes not alone of his countrymen but of many of our own who have denied that all kinds of protection, whatever its scratchiness, may be from the English point of view, failing to have been a particularly bad thing for us.

The only quarter from which we have suffered by the tariff, according to our friend, is the failure of the American government to recognize it as a legitimate by the Civil War and the revolution in the shipping business caused by the substitution of iron for timber.

But we in this country, ought to do things more like reasoning beings. I grant that in the so-called "rush hours," when it is not a question of being able to get into a seat, but one of being able to get into a train, great allowance and forbearance should be extended. But cannot the train manager, or whatever he may call himself, set that he himself makes all hours "rush hours"? As fast as the traffic decreases the facilities decrease also. Does he not know that hundreds of persons every day hurry to the bridge to avoid the "rush hours" only to find that because the management has not improved the facilities the "rush hours" have already arrived? Does he not know, too, that hundreds remain at their business places till the "rush hours" are over only to find because of the withdrawal of facilities that the "rush hours" are still there? Does he not know that, owing to the continued and rapid shortening up of trains and time headway after the "rush hours" and its correspondingly early resumption before them, proportionately the same number of passengers are compelled to ride without seats from 11 to 4 as during any other interval; and this a class of persons, not young nimble and vigorous like those who joyously rush to and from business every day, but the elderly and the infirm to whom a seat is a necessity as well as a blessing, and for which they have purposely, but often vainly, postponed or expedited their journey?

I don't care to be deemed frivolous or hypercritical, so I will not insist upon the abatement of the dreadful and absurd nuisance of the engineer's ringing his bell with all his might when backing his train down to another track—the danger, if any, being 500 feet away from the engine.

I don't care to be deemed frivolous or hypercritical, so I will not insist upon the abatement of the dreadful and absurd nuisance of wasting money to adorn a train and engine with the so-called "New York and Brooklyn Bridge," as though the management were rather apprehensive that somebody would attempt to break in some night to steal them, and hence it was desirable to do something to protect the property; but I will protest, and protest again, that the management, which are supposed to take care of the front platforms of the rear cars on the Brooklyn side, will not open their gates to let passengers through there, even in summer. The Brooklyn trains all start from a point that brings the rear brooklyn cars directly at the head of the stairs leading into the station. Consequently that particular car forms the quickest and easiest point of access to the platform, the doors of which are open daily for the entry of passengers, and yet it is comely desirable to have a bay window heading against it to keep it closed. I have often been one of half a dozen to be left behind because of this unavoidable piece of pygmy-headedness. There are no appointments, no seats, no platform, no help, no room out of the seats at any price or price, and all that doors that will not open readily and easily, as well as anything else, are brought into requisition to accomplish the object, and windows of the bridge cars are opened only when the thermometer reading approaches the zero mark, and are glued shut in the winter months—the windows, at any rate, remaining closed.

The management superintendents, the ventilation department must have graduated in the school of How not to do it, for it often rains, and for frays, and wears out the cars, and so on, to be considered, even something else, and that one who is intelligent about such a thing, and who is not a slave to the public opinion, would attempt to break in some night to steal them, and hence it was desirable to do something to protect the property; but I will protest, and protest again,

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